

needed to fund the program and how the FCC intends to collect the money. The goal is to administer the program without raising telephone rates. Therefore, the report asks detailed questions that are necessary to put the FCC on record to justify the cost of the program. The FCC made commitments to Congress that schools/libraries program would not raise rates and I intend to ensure that the agency keeps its word. If the FCC does not deliver on its commitments to protect consumers from rate increases, Congress will step in and make the FCC accountable.

Finally, my amendment also directs the FCC to cap the salary of the program's administrator at a government salary—as opposed to the \$250,000 salary the FCC set up. I support the program but the Congress must take measures such as these to ensure that the agency administers the law and policy that the Congress adopts. It is not the FCC's job to adopt policies which exceed the authority given to it by the Congress.●

COMMEMORATION OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

● Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to commemorate the 177th Anniversary of the beginning of the revolution that won Greece's independence from the Ottoman Empire. I was proud to join with fifty-one of my colleagues in sponsoring Senate Resolution 171 which designates today "Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy."

The strong ties between the United States and Greece extend back to the birth of this nation. Indeed, the Founding Fathers looked to the principles formulated by the Greek philosophers when composing the governing documents of the United States. As Thomas Jefferson stated, "to the ancient Greeks . . . we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves out of Gothic darkness." America owes much to the Greeks for all they have given us, then and now.

The Greeks have been members of my state's communities for over one hundred years. Over 6,000 residents of Rhode Island claimed Greek heritage in the last Census. When they first came to the state they worked in the factories and on the shores. Today, the descendants of these first immigrants continue to prosper and enrich the state and rest of the country through their contributions to banking, medicine, the tourism industry and the arts.

Although today we commemorate the Greek victory over 400 years of domination by the Ottoman Empire, we must also remember that Greece is still not able to celebrate complete peace and freedom. Almost twenty-four years ago, Turkey invaded Cyprus and today 35,000 troops continue to occupy over 40% of the island and inflict human rights abuses on the 660,000 Cypriots. Recently, I was proud to sign on as a

cosponsor of a concurrent resolution which calls for the U.S. to encourage the end of restrictions on the freedoms and human rights of the enclaved people in the occupied area of Cyprus. We must continue to work to resolve the Cyprus problem and reduce the tensions that exist between Greece and Turkey.

But, for today, let us celebrate the anniversary of Greek Independence, the richness of the Greek heritage and the legacy of democracy that country gave to the world.●

IN RECOGNITION OF ALDO VAGNOZZI

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a good friend from my home state of Michigan, Mr. Aldo Vagnozzi. Aldo is retiring after a long and distinguished career as a journalist for labor publications.

In 1948, Aldo Vagnozzi began his career in journalism as a Senior at Wayne State University, writing for the Michigan CIO News. He became editor of the Michigan AFL-CIO News, and served in that position until 1968, when he joined the Detroit Labor News. By 1970, Aldo was already considered a legend by many of his fellow labor journalists for the way in which he kept the labor community informed about news affecting the working people of Michigan. One of his colleagues is quoted in the Detroit Labor News as saying "The movement for worker rights and justice has been immeasurably strengthened by his dedication to his craft and his talents as a labor journalist."

Although he is retiring after 50 years of work, that does not mean that Aldo Vagnozzi's commitment to the people of Michigan is also coming to an end. In early May, he will participate in the Michigan Labor Press Conference, where he will share with other labor editors and writers some of the insights he gained throughout his career. And Aldo will also continue his leadership in the public service arena as well. His strong principles and beliefs have earned him the support of people from all walks of life and political persuasions in his home city of Farmington Hills, Michigan, where he serves as the first directly elected mayor in history.

Mr. President, throughout his 50 years in journalism, Aldo Vagnozzi has used the power of the written word to advance the cause of workers' rights, safety and justice. I know my colleagues will join me in saluting Aldo for his exceptional career and in wishing him well in his retirement.●

ORDER OF PRECEDURE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask to be recognized in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor of the Senate to speak of the tragedy which occurred in Jonesboro, AR, yesterday. News reports tell us that two boys, aged 11 and 13, dressed in camouflage, opened fire on the students and teachers of the West Side Middle School. Four children were killed, and a teacher who tried to shield other children also lost her life.

This tragedy did not occur in my home State of Illinois, but, sadly, it could have. Gun violence on children has become so common in America that kids killed in drive-by shootings are no longer lead stories on the national news. We are jarred into the harsh reality of modern American violence only when there is something unusual about the gun violence on children: the number of victims, the setting, or the perpetrators.

In Jonesboro, AR, five victims at a peaceful school, dead at the hands of other children with guns, have caught the national attention for at least a moment. News stories headline the tragedy. This evening's news begins with long features about what this means. Today, from Africa, President Clinton calls on Attorney General Reno to investigate. Parents across America pause for a heartbeat to wonder, "Can it happen to my child? Can it happen at my child's school?"

Sadly it can and it does.

I hope that America is not so careless or so inattentive not to take a moment and reflect on what is happening with these terrible crimes. Sadly, this is not the first or only instance when this has occurred. On December 1 of last year, a young boy opened fire on a student prayer circle in the hallway in Heath High School in West Paducah, KY. Three students were killed, five others wounded. A 14-year-old student, described as small and emotionally immature, was arrested.

Two months earlier, a 16-year-old outcast in Pearl, MI, was accused of killing his mother, then going to school and shooting nine students. Two of them died, including the boy's ex-girlfriend. Authorities later accused six friends of conspiracy, saying the suspects were part of a group that dabbled in Satanism.

Closer to here, a sniper who holed up in the woods wounded two students December 15 outside a school in the southwestern Arkansas town of Stamps. The two, both wounded in the hip, were hospitalized overnight. A 14-year-old boy was arrested in the manhunt.

And now the news reports to us what was confiscated as being in their possession. Mr. President, listen to what was confiscated in the possession of these two boys, 11 and 13, who opened gunfire at this Jonesboro school: three rifles, three revolvers, two semiautomatic pistols, two derringers, and 3,000 rounds of ammunition.

It is interesting when foreign visitors come to the United States and reflect

on the great American culture and on our values, how many of them that I have entertained in Illinois or in Washington comment about the love affair America has with guns. They are puzzled—what is it about this great Nation that would allow so many people to own so many guns and so many to be used recklessly, causing such violent crime and death on a daily basis?

There are some things that are being done about it on a State basis that we should reflect on at this moment. Some States have decided that adults in possession of firearms have a responsibility to possess those firearms in a way that is safe and that protects members of their family as well as others from coming into contact with the firearms.

I recall a story that came about at a recent family reunion, because in my family in Illinois there are many gunowners. One of them was talking about the fact that one of my relatives, he was a father of a young boy, but he had his guns safely locked away, that that little boy could never get to those guns. And another older man in the family said, "Yes, I know, that's how I used to do it. I'd lock them away and my son could never find them." But his son was sitting there and he said, "Dad, I got into those guns all kinds of times." Guns and Christmas presents are going to be discovered by kids. And if they can be discovered, tragedy can happen.

So a number of States have decided to do something about it. They have assigned responsibility to the adults involved and said that they must be careful. If you want to own a handgun, a pistol, a rifle, a shotgun, you must own it responsibly so that gun does not become a weapon of violence and death and some innocent victim result.

Listen to what is happening in America with gun crimes:

The rate of firearm-related deaths among American children is 15 times greater than that in 25 other industrialized countries combined.

In a 1-year period, 86 percent of all gun-related deaths in the industrialized world occurred in the United States of America.

Every day in my home State of Illinois, a child is killed by gun violence.

At least one child in Illinois every month is unintentionally killed as a result of a gun accident.

In 1993, the Department of Justice issued a report that concluded street gang violence in Chicago is becoming increasingly lethal, primarily because of escalating gang firepower.

We took a survey for 1 month in the State of Illinois of gun crimes involving children. In 1 month in 1996 in a Chicago suburb, 15-year-old Ronald Walker was shot in the head as he left a grocery store.

That same month, police had to rush two 7-year-old boys, Donnell Ross and Kenyon Pope, to Cook County Hospital when they wounded each other while playing with a .38 pistol found in their apartment. One of the boys was shot in the chest.

Earlier in the same week that Donnell and Kenyon were shot, an 18-year-old boy handed a 9-year-old boy a loaded gun and told him the safety was on. It wasn't. That 9-year-old pulled the trigger. He shot 15-year-old Theunco Bell in the throat.

A day before that incident, a 10- and 12-year-old were playing with a gun. It went off and killed the 10-year-old whose name was Michael Fuller.

As former staff physician at Cook County Hospital said:

Whether intentional or unintentional . . . children have access to guns. Children are naturally curious, and a gun can be a very sexy toy for them.

So what can we do? Can we watch in horror as the stories come to us from Chicago, from Jonesboro, from Kentucky, from Mississippi? Can we lament the horror that has been visited on these children, their families, their teachers and the whole community? Can we say that this is just part of the price of doing business in America today, or do we act? Do we decide as a nation that it is time for us to come to grips with this challenge, to accept the reality that people, if they are to own guns, must own them responsibly?

Senator KOHL of Wisconsin has trigger-lock legislation, which I support, which would reduce the likelihood of gun violence among children and, as I mentioned, many States have passed legislation imposing responsibilities on gun owners so that they not let these guns go into the hands of children.

Are these laws in the States effective? Well, as a matter of fact, a study published in October in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* makes clear that children's lives have been saved when States have required gun owners to make guns inaccessible to children. The study found that accidental shooting deaths were reduced by 23 percent in States that passed child access prevention gun laws.

Mr. President, I will be preparing legislation to federalize child access prevention gun laws. There is no reason why every child in America shouldn't be protected at least in some small way by assuming that every owner of a gun has to own it responsibly, keep it in a safe manner, keep it in a way where it cannot be accessed by children.

I know this won't put an end to gun violence. There is just too much of it going on in America. But, in fact, it may slow down the carnage and it may reduce the horror of the stories that we heard just this evening and last night from Jonesboro, AR. As we reflect on these four children and their teacher and this terrible tragedy, keep in mind that gun violence every day claims the lives of children and adults alike across America, black and white and Hispanic. It is a scourge, a scourge on those who live not only in big cities but in small towns.

I hope that my colleagues on a bipartisan basis will join me in this effort to reduce the incidence of gun violence. I also hope that this tragedy in

Jonesboro, AR, will inspire us to do it and do it quickly. I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. KENNEDY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I will just take a few moments of time to revisit the proposal of the Senator from Oklahoma, Senator NICKLES, to strike the funding that would be available under this legislation to implement the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill. According to GAO that legislation benefited some 25 million Americans who change or lose their job every year and could face pre-existing condition exclusions or denial of coverage. That legislation passed 100-0 in the Senate; the conference report passed 98 to 0.

We know there are gaps in terms of the implementation for providing these critical protections to those in the disability community and really for any American who has a condition that could make it difficult for them to get or keep insurance. HCFA asked the Appropriations Committee to reallocate resources to give them the ability to hire the necessary skilled staff, primarily with expertise in the insurance business, who would be able to assist them to carry forward these protections for the disabled community, the mental health community, and for all Americans. That is very, very important, Mr. President. We had some debate and discussion about this earlier today.

At this time, I want to read into the RECORD a very fine letter from Nancy-Ann Min DeParle, who is the head of HCFA. She writes:

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: I am writing to request your assistance in securing funding for HCFA to implement the insurance reform provisions of HIPAA. The \$6 billion and 65 FTEs that we have requested for this purpose will allow us to implement the HIPAA provisions as well as those enacted subsequently in the Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act and the Mental Health Parity Act in those states that have not fully implemented HIPAA. As you know, currently, 5 states are not implementing HIPAA. HCFA is requesting these resources to guarantee these protections to the 54 million people—or one in five Americans—that live in these five states where under HIPAA, HCFA is the backup federal enforcement agency.

Moreover, we understand that as many as 30 states may not have standards that comply with the Mental Health Parity Act and as many as 10 states may not have standards that comply with the Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act. We don't have precise numbers because states are not required to notify HCFA about their intentions to implement these two laws. In addition, we believe that many states may not have implemented other parts of HIPAA. For example, some states have not implemented guaranteed availability in the group market or certificates of creditable coverage. Moreover, HCFA also has enforcement authority over non-Federal governmental plans.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this